



THE ON GUARD

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"We are representing so much more than other sponsors. We are representing the men and women who are fighting for our freedom so we can be out here enjoy this sport."

— Jonathon Newton



Thomas A. Hill

Longest serving Guard civilian dead at age 86

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — The National Guard's longest-serving civilian, a former master sergeant and warrant officer who for many personified the Guard, has died.

Thomas A. Hill - known as Tommy in the corridors of the Army National Guard Readiness Center that he helped to make a reality - was 86 when he died at his Arlington, Va., home on Feb. 12.

"Tommy Hill was Mr. National Guard," said Lt. Gen. Clyde Vaughn, director of the Army National Guard. "No one will ever be able to top his legacy."

Born in Wilkes-Barre, Pa., a year after World War I, Hill began a lifetime of service - including stints with the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps, Interior and the Army - after graduating from high school. He never retired.

He joined the National Guard Bureau as a civilian in 1946 and never left. He was the training officer in the Army Guard's Training Division for many years.

"He's responsible for there being an officer corps," said Lt. Col. Debra Rice, executive officer to the director. According to *I Am the Guard*, an official history, Hill was proudest of his role in establishing state officer candidate schools.

"In 1950, only four states had their own commissioning programs," the book says. "By the early 1960s, each state had its own school."

Presidential praise:

Bush thanks Guardsmen for service; outlines better call-up process, increased benefits

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau

WASHINGTON — President George Bush thanked America's National Guard men and women for serving, paid tribute to the fallen and outlined improvements for the National Guard on Feb. 9.

"America is grateful," the president said at the National Guard Memorial Building, home of the National Guard Association of the United States, a few weeks before the March 19 third anniversary of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

"The Guard has been fighting for America since before America was a nation," Bush said. "From your 'First Muster' in 1636 to today's global war on terror,

Americans have counted on the Guard to protect our land and defend our way of life."

Some 290,000 people have joined the National Guard since Sept. 11, 2001, the president said. And more than 350,000 have re-enlisted. "These brave Americans saw the future the terrorists intend for us, and they said, 'Not on my watch'," Bush said, to a round of applause.

He spoke in the Walsh-Reckord Hall of States next to a newly unveiled bronze bust of himself wearing a flight suit as 1st Lt. George W. Bush, Texas Air National Guard. He was a jet fighter pilot and served from 1968-73.

"Our country owes [Guard members] something in return," Bush said.

He listed improvements for Guard members that have

"Our Guardsmen ... are standing up for America. You need to know that this administration supports you."

—Pres. George W. Bush



Photo by Sgt. Jim Greenhill

President George W. Bush joked that the sculptor of a new bust of the commander in chief during his National Guard days "Caught me before my hair went gray."

Bush: Page 10

Air Guard officer savors Super Bowl experience

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau



Capt. Bryce Fisher

SEATTLE, Wash. — In the best tradition of the National Guard, Capt. Bryce Fisher quietly and competently did his job as a professional football player during Super Bowl XL in Detroit on Feb. 5. And when his Seattle Seahawks lost to the Pittsburgh Steelers, 21-10, the traditional Washington Air National Guard officer borrowed a phrase from the Army: Drive on.

Two days after playing in the biggest game of his life, the 28-

year-old Fisher was already focused on next season and the next Super Bowl. "Our goal is to win that game," he said.

When he is not guarding America, the 6-foot-3, 268-pound Fisher guards the Seattle Seahawks' end zone. He was the starting left defensive end this season.

Bryce Fisher the Guardsman can earn a medal or a ribbon or be presented a commander's coin for a job well done. Now, Bryce Fisher the football player has a National

Football Conference championship ring. And he's played in a Super Bowl.

"It was probably the greatest experience of my football career," he said. When he ran onto Ford Field, Fisher was struck by the spectacle of it all. The security. The people. The cameras.

But when the game began he forgot about all of that, focusing entirely on his job. "During the game, it felt like a regular season

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About The On Guard

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The glass ceiling is no excuse

ARLINGTON, Va. — Meg Whitman, president and chief executive officer of eBay Inc., is the kind of corporate leader that Air National Guard Maj. Gen. Terry Scherling likes to read about and learn from.

Whitman is ambitious. She is focused. She has the qualities that would make her a solid military leader if that was her calling. Business Week magazine called Whitman "the czarina of Net auctions" a few years ago.

Scherling studies leaders like Whitman - and Michael Dell of Dell computers and Frederick Smith of FedEx - to sharpen her own management skills and to learn of ways to make life better for the people who work for her. Scherling, who received her second star in January, is the first woman director of the National Guard Bureau's Joint Staff. That makes her this country's ranking woman officer in the National Guard.

She and Whitman are role models for other women during this year's celebration of National Women's History Month. It happens every March. This is the month that Congress and President Ronald Reagan in 1987 designated for paying tribute to women's contributions to this country.

Meg Whitman could learn a thing or two by reading about Maj. Gen. Terry Scherling. She has climbed a lot higher up the military ladder than she thought she ever would when she earned her commission from the Air Guard's Academy of Military Science in Knoxville, Tenn., in 1975. She was 20 then, the youngest member of her class. She was also a junior majoring in physical education at North Dakota State University.

Three decades later she is focused on making a difference for people serving at the National Guard Bureau near the nation's capital and bringing the active duty, Guard and Reserve communities closer together.

A commission and some military experience, she reasoned 30 years ago, would look very nice on her resume when she began looking for a management position in the civilian world. Instead, the young 2nd lieutenant landed a job as maintenance squadron administrative officer at the North

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By Master Sgt. Bob Haskell
Senior Correspondent

Dakota Air Guard's 119th Fighter Group in Fargo, about 15 miles from her hometown of Davenport. She has been leading people and managing supplies and equipment ever since.

She has never been intimidated by the "glass ceiling."

Her most recent job was with the Department of Defense Joint Staff at the Pentagon - deputy director for anti-terrorism and homeland defense. She managed members of every armed service and a lot of civilians while helping to safeguard America from terrorist aggression and deadly disasters like Katrina.

Scherling said she encountered the glass ceiling - that invisible barrier that stops women short of reaching the top professional positions - when she was a major and a lieutenant colonel during the late 1980s and early '90s.

"Basically, I did not always feel that the selections were based on qualifications," she said. "There were a few occasions when I was told it was not my turn yet. On one occasion I was told that the other candidates had families to take care of - as if I didn't."

There was also the fact that she was "non-rated," a logistician, not a "rated" pilot or navigator. She did not fly the airplanes. In the Air Force, the top leadership positions traditionally go to those with aircrew back-

grounds. Scherling seemed blocked in all directions. But she would not quit.

"I just continued to pursue my career goals and to ensure that I had the right qualifications. I held to the philosophy that the best people, whether they're male or female, aircrew members or not, would be selected for different jobs sooner or later," Scherling said.

And she took advantage of some sound advice and some opportunities that general officers, all men, offered to her.

Make yourself stand out from the crowd, offered one brigadier. So Scherling worked diligently enough to become one of three Air Guard officers to attend the Industrial College of the Armed Forces at the National Defense University in Washington in 1994-95.

She took advantage of Maj. Gen. Paul Weaver Jr.'s offer to be the Air National Guard's chief support officer for 3½ years when he was the Air Guard director. "He gave me the opportunity to see the importance of the role between the National Guard Bureau and the states and units in order to explain their needs to the active component," Scherling said.

She also bought into the philosophy of her father, retired Air Guard Maj. Gen. Darrol Schroeder, who served for 39 years in uniform. He stressed the importance of helping active duty commanders in this country and Europe understand what the National Guard is and what it can do. His daughter is doing the same thing.

Scherling has learned her lessons well enough to inspire and mentor others who have worked for her. "You had a significant role in my continued development as an officer in the Navy and as a professional," recently wrote one of the men who served with her at the Pentagon.

Here's her take on all of this. It doesn't matter if you're rated or unrated. "My philosophy is that it's about leadership. I don't believe you have to have an aircrew rating to be an outstanding leader."

"You do have to be qualified," Scherling added. "If you're not qualified, it's easy to say that there is a glass ceiling and that it prevented you from going any further."

Missouri Army National Guard gets new facilities

From Missouri National Guard reports

DEXTER, Mo. — Lt. Gen. Clyde A. Vaughn, Army National Guard director, returned to his native town early February to cut the ribbon on a new readiness center.

"Even though this is a magnificent building, it's not the building that makes it work," said Vaughn. "What makes it work are the people in the community, the town, the employers and the Soldiers here in this unit. They are part of this community."

The 27,708 square foot, single story, Missouri National Guard Readiness Center will house the company headquarters of the 1221st Transportation Company.

Meanwhile, at Fort Leonard Wood, the UH-60 Black hawk has a new nest - and the Missouri Army National Guard and the Army have a valuable training partnership.

The Christopher "Kit" Bond Army Aviation Support Facility, Missouri Army National Guard, also opened early February. The \$11.1 million structure will be a support facility for the 106th Aviation Battalion's Company C and Detachment I, Company D formerly of Jefferson City, Mo.

The flight facility houses two Black hawk hangars.

Vaughn, the highest ranking officer ever to come from the Missouri National Guard, assumed duties as director, Army National Guard, National Guard Bureau on June 15. As director, Vaughn guides the formulation, development and implementation of all programs and policies affecting the Army National Guard.

"It's times like these that make you feel so proud to be a part of the 1221st and the Missouri National Guard," said Sgt. 1st Class Phillip Crow.



Missouri National Guard photo

Lt. Gen. Clyde A. Vaughn, director of the Army National Guard, cuts the ribbon to open the new readiness center.

Armored vehicles provide engineers heavy-duty protection

By Spc. **Anthonie Seymour**
140th Regimental Training Institute

FORT LEONARD WOOD, Mo. — Silhouettes of moving vehicles are seen against a desert morning sky. Convoys of military vehicles have passed this way before, but a patient enemy hides in the open waiting. The enemy is not prejudiced. Any target will do. He needs just one, faintly unaware or just slightly out of line with the others. Then an explosion rips into morning, bringing distress, chaos and death.

An improvised explosive device, (IED) has struck again.

Coalition troops in Iraq have dealt with about 260 IEDs a week, according to statistics provided by the Counter Improvised Explosive Device Task Force, Maneuver Support Center, Fort Leonard Wood. They have had more incidents involving IEDs than they have had against the enemy with small arms and indirect fire combined.

The Missouri Army National Guard's 110th Combat Engineer Battalion has been joined in the fight by the North Dakota Army Guard's 164th Engineer Battalion.

These Soldiers have attended the Route Reconnaissance Clearance Course at the Countermine Training Facility at Fort Leonard Wood to train with Mine Protective Clearance Vehicles (MPCV) before going to Iraq to seek out these killers so that fellow Soldiers will not find them by accident. Some new, heavily armored vehicles are keeping them safer than they were before.

Enter the Buffalo, the Meerkat, the Husky and the RG-31, the Army's new cutting-edge equipment designed to protect Soldiers from explosive devices.

"Before, route clearance was done with Humvees, and IEDs were spotted visually," said Sgt. 1st Class Keith Newman, noncom-



Photos by Spc. **Anthonie Seymour**

The Buffalo employs its 30-foot robotic arm to handle an IED. The arm has a camera attached to investigate suspicious items and a "spork" to manipulate objects which keeps Soldiers at a safe distance.

missioned officer in charge of the course. "Soldiers would have to get out of the vehicle to clear the area."

Soldiers out in the open and without blast resistant vehicles were more vulnerable to attack, Newman added.

Staff Sgt. Lekendrick Stallworth, one of the instructors, was trained on MPCV vehicles while in Iraq. Now he is training Soldiers on the equipment at Fort Leonard Wood.

"We're not even able to [issue] licenses yet, it's so new," Stallworth, "We're the only training site with the MPCVs."

Word has spread quickly, however, and these vehicles are already well known to the

National Guard Soldiers, said Staff Sgt. Joseph Magruder of the 110th Battalion.

"The area where we're going has a large amount of IEDs and VBIEDs (Vehicle Borne Improvised Explosive Devices)," he said, "I'd rather be doing this than a lot of other things. It's already battle tested, and no one has died in one of these."

This family of vehicles is the tip of the spear in blast protection technology. The heavily-armored, V-shaped underbelly is designed to divert the impact of the blast rather than absorb it, said Staff Sgt. Robert Koppenhofer, another instructor.

That means active Army, National Guard

and Reserve engineers will be taking measured risks so that foot Soldiers and military convoys won't have to.

"Route clearance was the most dangerous mission for combat engineers," said North Dakota Sgt. Guy Stevens. "It's improved a lot. It's gotten much safer."

Each vehicle is ballistic and armor protected against landmines, hostile enemy fire and roadside bombs, and each is designed to wipe out the threat.

"These vehicles work as a package," said Newman. "The Meerkats and the Huskys detect and mark anything that looks suspicious. The Buffalo investigates what it is, and the RG-31 pulls security for the group."

The Buffalo is perhaps the most recognizable of the group. The six-wheeled vehicle is over nine feet high, is nearly 27 feet long, and weighs about 24 tons.

The Buffalo also features a 30-foot remote-controlled arm with what Soldiers jokingly call a "spork" (spoon/fork) attached to the end. The robotic arm is used to handle suspicious items, distancing the Buffalo's human cargo from a potential deadly blast.

Also attached to the arm is a camera that allows the team to investigate up-close what the "spork" is handling 30 feet away - day or night.

Aside from the obvious safety features, Soldiers are pleased with the Buffalo's "Cadillac" comforts, said Magruder.

All the vehicles in the MPCV series are equipped with comfortable seats, spacious cabs, air conditioning, individual rifle racks and blast-proof windows.

Whether you consider the Buffalo a beauty or a beast, these Guard Soldiers and trainers agree it's worth its weight in gold.

"These things are saving lives," said Koppenhofer, "because these guys are getting hit everyday."



A Soldier enjoys the view from atop a Buffalo at the Countermine Training Facility at Fort Leonard Wood, Mo. The Buffalo is one of the Mine Protected Clearance Vehicles the Army is using to deal with roadside bombs.

Idaho Apache Soldiers train for Afghanistan mission

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau

FORT HOOD, TEXAS – Idaho Army National Guard Sgt. Russell George smiled as he reached into an Army Combat Uniform pocket for his billfold.

He was in a chow hall during a training day in late January, and the governor of his state had just sat across the table from the Apache attack helicopter mechanic and asked if he had any family snapshots.

George is from Kuna, Idaho, and he is an aircraft technician in civilian life. Now he is with the Idaho Army Guard's 1st Battalion, 183rd Aviation Regiment, which is training for a year-long deployment as Task Force Talon to Afghanistan.

The task force will serve as a quick reaction force to support multinational ground operations with the only attack helicopter unit in the country, it was explained.

George reached across the table to Idaho Gov. Dirk Kempthorne, right hand clutching his billfold that was open to the pictures of his wife Crystal and their three children: Nathan, 4, Gabby, 3, and Connor, 2.

George has been at Fort Hood since late October. "We've had some really good training," he said. "We got to work on some aircraft. It's good for [traditional Guard Soldiers] to have a couple of months to work on them and get back in the swing of things. I wanted to serve my country and make a better place for my family to live. I'm looking forward to doing my job."

Members of the 183rd have trained in Texas and at home in Idaho. They've worked on engines. They've conducted live firing exercises with 2.75-inch rockets and 30-millimeter rounds. They've simulated searches of homes and encountered civilians dressed as Afghans and who pretend not to understand English. They've found weapons caches; manned checkpoints; been certified as combat lifesavers; reacted to mortar fire and faced attacks at their forward operating base. They've moved in convoys; completed individual weapons

qualification; performed force protection; learned how to treat detainees; picked up a smattering of Arabic dialects and been briefed on the Afghan tribal culture.

"They're doing a great job," said Lt. Col. John Fruge with Fort Hood's 75th Training Support Brigade. "They're completing gunnery back in Idaho. The ground training here is great. They are well on target to get out of here and meet their departure date."

The live fire training for the helicopter crews was moved back to Idaho because of a high risk of wildfires in Texas, said Col. Perry Barth, aviation facility commander. "They had to find another place to shoot."

Trainers say Idaho's Gowen Field Air National Guard Base, where snow-capped mountains are on the horizon, resembles Afghanistan. "The ranges at Idaho are superb," said Lt. Col. Collier Lipple, the battalion commander. The state got the training mission because other places did not have the same maintenance facilities or level of inter-service cooperation, he added.

Guardsmen have conducted day and night live fire training at Gowen Field, firing dozens of rockets and hundreds of cannon rounds per crew and practicing rearming and refueling in remote locations.

"We can have an aircraft returned, refueled and reloaded in about 30 minutes. What we do here will be darn close to what we do in country," said Capt. Dane Vranish, a plans officer, as he stood in front of several Apaches parked down range.

"Every engagement is recorded on tape. We have graders that evaluate the tapes and give them a score. Once a crew has gotten a certain score, they're qualified and ready to go into country," Vranish said. "Of everything we do, this is the most important. We're an attack helicopter battalion. Our sole function in life is to send rounds down range as a quick reaction force for troops in contact with enemy forces."

2nd Lt. Victor Contreras flies Apaches and is a platoon leader. "I feel very confident in



Photos by Sgt. Jim Greenhill

An Apache attack helicopter is ready to fly for live fire training at Sgt. Gowen Field near Boise, Idaho, where members of the 1st Battalion, 183rd Aviation were preparing for a year of duty in Afghanistan.

on now. We're learning other people's jobs. We're not just doing our own. I'm excited. I'm ready to go."

Like Barnes, Pfc. Brandon Barrera, who enlisted in July 2004 and volunteered for this deployment to gain overseas experience, said he wants to do his duty and then get back home to wife Stephanie and infant son Brandon Lee Barrera. They were his motivation to enlist, he explained. "I miss them so much. I only got to spend the first six months with my son. I missed the whole pregnancy because of training."

The training has boosted his confidence. "I feel comfortable," he said. "We're going with a good set of guys. We'll be safe." A few feet away, Gov. Kempthorne paced a dusty courtyard at Fort Hood, thinking about the family snapshots Sgt. George had shown him in the chow hall.

"He's so proud," Kempthorne said. "You saw. He just lit up when he was able to show me the pictures. I said a prayer silently that he will be home to that family." The governor stopped pacing. "The irony is that by his going half a world away, his three kids are safer because he's helping to make this world safer."



Idaho Army National Guard Spc. Tyler Davis maintains a 30-millimeter gun underneath an Apache helicopter.



Idaho Army National Guard Soldiers with the 1st Battalion, 183rd Aviation practice clearing a house while training at Fort Hood, Texas, before they deploy to Afghanistan. The Soldiers found a weapons cache that was planted in the house.

Idaho governor urges Guard equipment to be resupplied

By Sgt. Jim Greenhill

National Guard Bureau

BOISE, Idaho – Guard members return from war, but their equipment often doesn't, and Idaho's governor said it must be replaced as soon as possible.

Replacing equipment that is left in a combat theater following overseas deployments is a readiness, morale, recruiting and retention issue, Idaho Gov. Dirk Kempthorne said in a wide-ranging interview during a visit to Fort Hood, Texas, in late January.

The governor visited members of the 1st Battalion, 183rd Aviation as they trained for a tour of duty in Afghanistan.

Failing to quickly re-supply equipment weakens homeland defense, said the governor whose resume includes an appointment to the homeland security task force by former Department of Homeland Security Secretary Tom Ridge.

A member of the Armed Services Committee when he was a U.S. senator, the man who rose from the mayor of Boise to Idaho's governor and National Guard commander in chief also questioned plans to strip C-130s from his state based on a recommendation by the 2005 Defense Base Closure and Realignment Commission.

The National Guard has excelled in missions overseas and at home since the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, Kempthorne said, and the operations tempo has strengthened the Guard by creating a reservoir of experienced Soldiers and Airmen.

"They're all combat veterans," he said. "That's incredible, the level of professionalism. As you multiply that among the states, for homeland security, what could be better?"

But Kempthorne warned that delays in replacing equipment threaten the Guard's ability to perform its mission.

Although he did not serve in the military, Kempthorne has maintained a high level of interest in his state's National Guard and in the armed forces. Before going to Fort Hood, the governor visited Cpl. Travis Green, an Idaho Marine who lost both legs during his third tour in Iraq, in the intensive care unit at the Bethesda Naval Hospital in Maryland. The governor speaks at service members' funerals whenever he is asked. He has visited Bosnia, Somalia and other hotspots as a senator, quizzing generals on lessons they have learned.

Army Col. David Mullins, director of reserve affairs and mobilization for III Corps and Fort Hood, said it isn't uncommon for governors to see off departing troops or welcome home those who are returning. But he could not recall a governor who has displayed Kempthorne's level of interest, repeatedly visiting troops in training.

"Governor Kempthorne's the first one," Mullins said. "That has such a tremendous



Photo by Sgt. Jim Greenhill

Gov. Dirk Kempthorne greets Sgt. Christina Wilkins and other members of the Idaho Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 183rd Aviation Battalion during a Jan. 27 visit to Fort Hood, Texas.

impact on the morale and welfare of Soldiers."

The governor visited Idaho Guardsmen serving in Iraq, and he has asked the Department of Defense to get him to Afghanistan. "How can I keep standing on the tarmac and telling these young troops 'God speed, but I'm not willing to come to see you?'" Kempthorne reasoned. "How do I say to the families, I'm not willing to go where they are because maybe there's some element of danger?"

"Everybody has a part that they can play in supporting the American Soldier," he said. "I'm always honored anytime I'm with Soldiers, what they represent for all of the United States. They affirm our freedom. They sacrifice. They put it all on the line in the name of freedom, and they answer the call to duty. So to be here is part of my responsibility as a representative of the people back home, to look these Soldiers in the eye, shake their hand, and tell them, 'Thank you.'"

Kempthorne also said it is his job to verify that troops have the equipment and training they need.

About 4,000 men and women of the Idaho National Guard have deployed overseas since the Sept. 11, 2001, attacks - some more than once. About 2,000 members of the 116th Brigade Combat Team returned from Iraq in November. Almost 75 percent of Idaho's Army Guard force structure has

deployed.

"We were already No. 1 in the nation for the percent per capita deployed," Kempthorne said. "And yet we still put together a battalion that went to Katrina."

How has Idaho maintained its high operations tempo? Kempthorne attributed it to Guard members, leadership and the training available at facilities such as the sprawling Gowen Field Air National Guard Base near Boise.

"The key reason is the quality of the Soldiers and Airmen that are in the Guard," he said. "You look at the skill level that you get from the National Guard: People that are judges, police chiefs, state troopers, teachers. They come from all walks of life, and they bring all those job skills. We have the talent, and it's a proven resource. I just want to have the equipment to match their talent."

The governor cited the example of the 116th Brigade Combat Team, which left its new generation of communications equipment in Iraq. He said that communications was a problem during the Katrina response and was cited as the No. 1 problem during the Sept. 11 attacks.

"Approximately 75 percent of the equipment which went with the 116th was left behind," Kempthorne said. "Now you bring back these combat veterans, and where's the equipment - for training, for morale, for recruiting? You bring a combat veteran home, and now you say, 'When we train, unfortunately we don't have the equipment,

so here's a manual?' That's only going to go so far.

"We are prepared for disasters - be they natural or man made - but the larger the disaster that befalls us, and the less equipment we have, the bigger the challenge. Also, under the umbrella of homeland security, does it make sense that you now take all of the equipment from the homeland overseas and leave it? I don't understand. That's a recipe for a problem."

Maj. Gen. Larry Lafrenz, Idaho's adjutant general, said a significant amount of equipment was left behind in Iraq. "We left the majority of our new family of rolling stock behind," said Lafrenz who accompanied the governor to Texas. "We left the majority of our communications equipment behind. We left a large number of combat systems behind. Leaving equipment in theater is probably the right thing to do. However, there has got to be a regeneration plan, and as quickly as feasible."

The governor also opposes plans to move C-130s from his state. "I totally, adamantly, disagree," he said. "The C-130 allows us to transport material and personnel. We're a one-hour commute by C-130 to Portland or Seattle. We have a 22-member weapons of mass destruction civil support team. All of that equipment and the individuals can be placed on a C-130, and we can be in Portland in one hour. Now you're going to have to have a C-130 come from another state farther east, stop, load and then go. You have added hours to a rescue."

Texas Guardsmen assist Italian navy after ferry disaster

By Chief Master Sgt. Gonda Moncada
and Tech. Sgt. Gregory Rippes
Texas National Guard Public Affairs

AUSTIN, Texas – Two Texas Army National Guardsmen on a peace mission unexpectedly found themselves on a recovery mission following the maritime disaster in the Red Sea Feb. 2.

Soldiers of the 1st Squadron, 124th Cavalry Regiment, Texas National Guard, recently deployed to the Sinai Peninsula as part of a multinational mission to observe the peace between Egypt and Israel. Then the unit commander, Lt. Col. Lee D. Schnell, received a call.

After the Egyptian ferry Al Salam Boccaccio went down in the Red Sea, the Italian navy, which has a unit patrolling that body of water as part of the multinational mission, made an urgent request for medical personnel. In response, Schnell immediately deployed 1st Lt. John "Doc" Brown, a physician assistant, and Master Sgt. Earl Redrick, a medic, to the area.

"It took us seven or eight hours to get to the scene in a boat that was designed to patrol the coastline, not necessarily open sea," Brown said. "We patrolled for 12 hours, but initially all we found were empty rafts until we found a lone survivor. He was very weak, but he managed to pull himself onto the boat. We got him out of his wet clothes, listened to his lungs and stabilized him."

"Not long after we found him, we discovered five survivors on a raft who were so weak that they could not lift themselves up, and we pulled them on board," the Texas Guardsman continued. "We took care of the elderly ones first. All survivors were pretty much in a state of exhaustion and barely hanging onto consciousness. We kept them awake and placed them in the cabin and turned up the heat. They had been in the water for 24 hours."

"Later, one survivor picked up by another boat was transferred to our boat as well," Brown said. "We hydrated all as best as we could orally and assessed their situations every

hour. We continued patrolling for another four or five hours, but unfortunately did not find any more survivors. We returned to the Sharm-El-Sheikh port, where ambulances waited for the survivors to be transported to a hospital."

Retrieval of bodies from the boat the Guardsman were on proved to be impractical.

"We were able to recover one deceased person, but unfortunately, the wake of our boat was so strong that most would float out of our reach," the lieutenant said. However, he noted, other boats were there to take care of that task.

Brown accompanied one more patrol the next day.

"We patrolled for approximately 12 hours, but we did not find any more survivors," the Guardsman reported. "The situation was very grim – an event I will never forget – but we did some good and we saved seven lives. As horrific as the scene was, we are very happy that in a small way, we were able to help."

At the conclusion of the search and rescue effort, Cmdr. Paolo Spagnoletta of the multinational force and observers shared with Schnell a letter of gratitude written by one of the survivors rescued by multinational forces ships.

"These lines convinced us that this has been a most memorable mission," the Italian naval officer said. "The salvage of only one life would have rewarded our efforts. Now, our thoughts go to the 1,000 people who are missing or dead and their families."

Schnell said he was extremely proud of the members of his unit who responded to the tragedy.

"Although only a few were able to participate directly, there were many more behind the scenes making sure these troopers had everything they needed to accomplish the mission," Schnell said. "Responding to a maritime disaster was certainly something we did not specifically train for, but the professionalism and training of the Army National Guard Soldier allows us to respond to almost anything, anytime and anywhere."



Photo by Lt. Cmdr. Pierpaolo Daniele

First Lt. John Brown, physician's assistant for the 1st Squadron, 124th Cavalry Regiment, examines a survivor of the Egyptian ferry disaster in the Red Sea. Brown was aboard the ITS Vedetta, a coastal patrol boat assigned to the Multi-National Force and Observers, during search and recovery operations on Feb. 3.

Army Guard to be fully manned, trained, equipped

By Donna Miles

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – As current recruiting successes continue, the Army will ensure that the reserve component force gets the full funding it requires, Army leaders told Pentagon reporters in early February.

"To be clear, we have no intention of cutting the number of National Guard or Reserve brigades, reducing the number of Guard or Reserve soldiers or cutting the level of Guard or Reserve funding," said Gen. Peter Schoomaker, Army chief of staff.

Rather, Schoomaker said, the Army is intent on building reserve component units that, like their active-duty counterparts, are fully manned, trained, equipped and led for the missions they will face in the 21st century.

Widespread media reports that President Bush and the Defense Department are planning to cut the National Guard and its budget are flat-out wrong, Schoomaker said.

These reports stem from a Jan. 18 news conference in which Army Secretary Francis J. Harvey described plans in the Quadrennial Defense Review to transform the Army National Guard.

Initial plans had called for increasing the number of brigade combat teams in the

Guard from 15 to 34, Harvey told reporters. But while the National Guard will continue to maintain 106 brigades, as planned, the breakdown will now be 28, not 34, brigade combat teams and 78 support brigades.

The change is designed to make the Guard better able to carry out its overseas operational missions as well as its critical homeland defense missions, Harvey explained.

The combat support units to be added to the Guard include military police, engineer, chemical, air defense and civil affairs units, all important to homeland defense missions.

"Contrary to what some have heard, we are not cutting the number of brigades," Schoomaker reiterated. The Guard will remain at 106 brigades – 28 brigade combat teams and 78 support brigades of varying types, he said. The Army Reserve will retain 58 support brigades.

"The only thing that will change is the mix of these components and the mix of units," Schoomaker said.

Lt. Gen. James Helmly, chief of the Army Reserve, agreed that the restructuring plan will help make the Army more ready and responsive to the threats it will face through the 21st century. He emphasized that "bigger is not better" and that capability will be the critical factor that enables the Army to keep its edge.

Guantanamo Bay troopers prepare incoming units

By Spc. Timothy Book

JTF-GTMO Public Affairs Office

GUANTANAMO BAY, Cuba – Recently, officers and senior noncommissioned officers from the Joint Task Force – Guantanamo Bay (JTF) traveled to Fort Lewis, Wash., to help incoming Maryland National Guard units prepare for the JTF mission.

The training was four days long and included briefings on what to expect at Guantanamo Bay (GTMO).

"We wanted to give them the big picture," said Sgt. Maj. Christopher Jones, operations sergeant major. "We gave them everything from general command briefings to leave policies."

The idea was to give them a brief overview of GTMO life and what to expect with the JTF mission. It is not intended to teach them everything, but enough to get them started the day they arrive.

"They don't have to hit the ground running. We want them to hit the ground at a decent walk," said Jones.

The officer responsible for setting up this training was Maj. Craig Sandman, operations officer. "My job is not only to source new units coming in," Sandman said. "I also develop training based on the general's guidelines."

The new units have the added challenge of being geographically diverse. "This group is coming from all over Maryland and, in fact,

from many other states," Sandman said. The unit is designated as HHC, 3rd Brigade, 29th Infantry Division, Maryland Army National Guard.

The diversity of its members doesn't seem to matter now that the unit has been training together, Sandman said. "They are now working as a staff," he said. "They're asking the right questions and they've come together as a tight, cohesive staff."

The unit has been given extensive GTMO-specific training on doing their individual jobs. "We gave them PowerPoint presentations and briefings about the mission here," Jones said. "In addition, we taught them how to give PowerPoint presentations and briefings."

This training will improve the time the unit spends here when they first arrive, said Sandman. "This should save at least four or five days when they get here because they won't have to ask questions like, 'What is this mission?' They can come down here and know what questions to ask. When we start the 'left seat - right seat' training, they'll already know what to expect."

Incoming units are expected to arrive soon. With the training they received from Jones, Sandman and others, they will arrive here better prepared to accept the JTF mission.

"They're ready," said Jones. "They are very motivated to get here. We kept telling them to stay motivated."

Airman has million-gallon goal in mind

By Master Sgt. Scott King

40th Air Expeditionary Group

OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM – She's well on her way, 160,000 and counting every day.

Senior Airman Daisy Eyerly, a National Guard Airman, arrived here with a lofty goal – to pump one million gallons of JP-5 fuel into B-52s and KC-135s in just 60 days.

"I wanted to accomplish this to sort of have bragging rights," she said. "It's just something we do in the fuels field. The more fuel we pump in less time, the stronger our stance is when talking about what we accomplished."

Fuels specialists here pump JP-5 around the clock. Their responsibilities include receiving, storing and issuing petroleum products for vehicles, aircraft and support equipment here.

The 40th Air Expeditionary Group Expeditionary Logistics Readiness Flight fuels specialist, a social worker by trade, said she has her work cut out for her.

"These jets are thirsty, but I'm pretty confident I will reach my goal," she said.

"Back home in Pennsylvania, I pull guard duty one weekend per month, and that time is usually filled with training and appointments. Here, I finally get to do my job – feed these jets with fuel so they can complete their wartime mission."

She has caught the attention of her peers and leadership.

"Daisy came here with a very good work ethic and great attitude," said Tech. Sgt. Thomas Truhett, her dayshift supervisor. "She should definitely accomplish her goal. She has actually asked us to keep her out on the flightline pumping gas into the next shift. That kind of attitude is exactly what will help her pump one million gallons, and it's infectious."

Determination is a key factor for Eyerly.

"I'm bound and determined to make this happen," she said. "If the weather remains pretty good and the jets keep flying, there's no stopping me. I want to be effective in my short time here and leave with a feeling of mission accomplishment."



Photo by Staff Sgt. Doug Nicodemus

Air National Guard Senior Airman Daisy Eyerly pumps fuel into a B-52. She is deployed to a forward operating location and hopes to pump 1 million gallons of fuel in 60 days.

Maryland Soldier saves life, receives Silver Star, dies from wounds

By Rick Roth

Maryland National Guard

BALTIMORE, Md. – Maryland Army National Guard Sgt. Michael McMullen was already providing aid to a wounded fellow Soldier when a second improvised explosive device detonated. With his back to the blast, McMullen shielded his comrade from deadly shrapnel and most likely saved his buddy's life. That action along with his actions during the 10 minutes preceding it would see McMullen receive the Silver Star, and it would ultimately cost him his life.

Last Dec. 24 a convoy led by members of the Maryland Army Guard's 243rd Engineer Company from Baltimore was returning to its forward operating base after a re-supply mission in western Iraq. McMullen, a professional firefighter and paramedic in his hometown of Salisbury, Md., had volunteered to serve as the convoy's aid man. For the return trip he shared a vehicle with Sgt. 1st Class James D. Bartholomew, the convoy commander and fellow member of the 243rd.

Shortly after the convoy's last vehicle exited the camp, there was the sound of an explosion and a radio message that the convoy had sustained an IED strike.

McMullen and Bartholomew immediately pulled their truck out of the convoy and raced past 13 vehicles to the site of the

attack. The blast had ruptured the fuel tank on another truck, and the vehicle was engulfed in flames. Sgt. Randal Divel, a 243rd Soldier, had been in the passenger seat and had gotten out of the burning vehicle. However his uniform had caught fire, and he was covered in flames.

The convoy began taking small arms fire from both sides of the road. McMullen pulled Divel to safety in front of the truck and rolled him on the ground, extinguishing the flames. McMullen then assessed the Soldier's injuries and had Bartholomew prep an IV bag.

That's when the second IED exploded.

McMullen, 25, died as a result of the wounds from that IED 17 days later, on Jan. 10 at Walter Reed Army Medical Center in Washington while surrounded by members of his family.

"We often use the word hero to describe personal acts that go above and beyond the call of duty," said Maj. Gen. Bruce Tuxill, adjutant general for Maryland. "By all accounts, Sgt. McMullen lived up to that definition, giving his life while caring for and protecting his fellow Soldiers."

McMullen began volunteering at the Salisbury Fire Department, located on Maryland's Eastern Shore, in December 2001. Two years later he was serving as a professional paramedic. He deployed with the 243rd last June.

"He was well respected," said Salisbury



Photo courtesy of the Maryland Army National Guard

Members of the Maryland Army National Guard's 243rd Engineer Company pay tribute to Sgt. Michael McMullen during a Jan. 17 memorial service in Kuwait after McMullen died of wounds he suffered in Iraq while saving the life of another Soldier.

Fire Chief David See. "He was a gung ho guy and was right there beside you, and he'll be missed."

Members of the 243rd held a memorial service for McMullen in Kuwait on Jan. 17. "Today we are here to pay our respects, to say farewell and to honor a rambunctious brother, a beautiful and caring son, a dedicat-

ed Soldier," said Chaplain (Capt.) Rodney Thomas. "Sgt. Michael McMullen was all these and more."

In addition to the Silver Star, McMullen was posthumously promoted to staff sergeant. He was interred at Arlington National Cemetery on Jan. 20. He is survived by his mother, father and two siblings.

National Guard sponsors profes:

By Tech. Sgt. Gary Hicks
National Guard Bureau

COLUMBIA, S.C. – What is America's favorite pastime? The traditional answer is baseball, but that's not true if you're one of the estimated 50 million people who fish in this land of the free and home of the brave.

That's right. Fifty million people in the United States go fishing. Do the math, and that's one in every six people living in the United States who go fishing at least once a year.

It is that kind of popularity that has made the sport of professional bass fishing an attractive promotional outlet for the Army National Guard. That is why the Guard is sponsoring a professional bass fishing team for the first time this year, said Col. Richard Guzzetta, chief of the Strength Maintenance Division in Arlington, Va.

The Guard this year signed a multiyear agreement with FLW Outdoors to sponsor four professional anglers in the sport's most lucrative bass fishing tour. The FLW Tour is equivalent to the NFL, the NBA or the PGA in professional bass fishing world -- only the world's best can compete.

FLW are the initials of Forest L. Wood of Flippin, Ark. Wood, a pioneer in bass fishing, founded Ranger Boats in 1968, just months after the very first professional bass tournament.

For those who don't know much about professional bass fishing, comparing it to NASCAR is an easy way to explain the venue as far as demographics and sponsorship by the National Guard.

NASCAR has been in existence since 1949, but at first the following was small and limited to the southern United States where it was born. In the mid-70s, the first race aired



Photo by Kathy Williams

The four professional anglers representing the National Guard this year on the FLW Tour are Tim Klingler, Jonathon Newton, Derek Jones and Ramie Colson Jr.

on national television and drew a small national audience. The racing sport exploded in the late 80s and early 90s, turning into a multibillion dollar a year industry.

The same can be said about professional bass fishing - only that sport is much younger than NASCAR. The first pro tournament was held in 1967, and for years it remained very popular in the Southeast. There were numerous circuits, with the Bass Anglers Sportsman Society being the most

prominent in the early years. That is still a major tour.

An important turning point in FLW Outdoors' history occurred in 1996 when Minneapolis businessman Irwin L. Jacobs purchased the Redman Tournament Trail. Jacobs later signed Wal-Mart as the tour's title sponsor. It was the first sponsorship for the world's largest retailer, and corporate America quickly followed suit.

Like NASCAR in the late 80's, FLW is exploding in participation, viewers and ratings, making it a prime target for the National Guard, said Guzzetta. The National Guard is also a primary sponsor for the No. 16 Ford driven by Greg Biffle on NASCAR's premier Nextel Cup tour. The car owned by Roush Racing finished second last year.

Due to the overwhelming success of the FLW, it has been able to increase payoffs at its premier events. This year's championship is worth up to one million dollars to the angler who can out-fish the field. A fisherman who finishes in 50th place during a regular season event gets \$10,000. That kind of prize money is attracting a lot of people who want to test their angling skills against the best fishermen in the world.

The National Guard team of veteran and up-and-coming anglers includes Jonathon Newton, Ramie Colson, Derek Jones and Tim Klingler.

– Newton, a native of Rogersville, Ala., has 11 top-10 finishes in 79 FLW Outdoors events since 1995. In both 2003 and '04, Newton scored major victories in back-to-back seasons in the Stren Series Central Division. In his career, he has earned more

than \$150,000 fishing the FLW Tour, Stren Series (formerly the EverStart Series) and Bass Fishing League. Newton is in his third season as an FLW Tour pro.

"It's an honor for me to be representing the National Guard," Newton said. "I do it with a lot of pride. We are representing so much more than other sponsors. We are representing the men and women who are fighting for our freedom so we can be out here enjoying this sport. If I had a choice to pick any team to be on, this is the one just for what the National Guard stands for. It means so much to me."

– Colson, from Cadiz, Ky., is a veteran tournament angler. He has fished in 76 FLW Outdoors events since 1995, including the Wal-Mart FLW Tour, Stren Series and Wal-Mart Bass Fishing League. In his career, Colson has notched 18 top-10 finishes including two victories in BFL competition. Last season marked Colson's first on the FLW Tour, and he has returned for 2006 with valuable experience under his belt.

"I am very pleased and honored to be a part of the National Guard team," Colson said. "The Army National Guard is about 350,000 strong and like one big family. We're like a family here at the FLW. We have a family atmosphere and share family values, and I think the FLW and National Guard make for a great combination."

– Jones, of Chicago, Ill., was relentless last season on the FLW Tour, finishing second in the amateur division. His runner-up designation was bolstered by two top-10 finishes at



Photo by Kathy Williams

FLW pro Tim Klingler sets the hook on an Okeechobee bass while fishing vegetation on shallow flats.

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sional bass anglers on FLW Tour

FROM PAGE 8

Pros

Beaver Lake and Wheeler Lake. This year he has stepped up to fish the FLW Tour as a pro.

"I'm extremely excited about this season with it being my first full season as a pro and representing the National Guard," Jones said. "Over the past few weeks, I've learned so much about the Guard. Being able to represent something that means so much to our country makes you push a little bit harder."

— Klinger, a renowned western pro from Boulder City, Nev., has made the top 10 in 15 of his 51 FLW Outdoors events. In 2004, Klinger won \$200,000 at the Wal-Mart Open on Beaver Lake by catching a final-round total of 10 bass weighing 24 pounds, 1 ounce. After a year's hiatus, Klinger is excited about his return to the FLW Tour.

"It feels awesome," Klinger said. "I am really proud to be out there fishing and supporting the men and women who protect our country."

For more information about FLW Outdoors and tournament schedules, browse www.flwoutdoors.com or call (270) 252-

ANG Bass Tournament slated for Georgia's Lake Sinclair in April

By Tech. Sgt. Gary Hicks
National Guard Bureau

ARLINGTON, Va. — The 116th Air Control Wing based at Warner Robins Air Force Base will host this year's Air National Guard bass tournament April 17-21 on Lake Sinclair near Milledgeville, Ga.

The annual event, sanctioned by the National Guard Bureau, lures Air National Guard anglers from around the country to compete in a two-man team format against their fellow Citizen-Airmen and the often elusive largemouth bass.

"The tournament gives fishermen from all over the country the opportunity to compete and enjoy fellowship with fellow Guardsmen," said retired Senior Master Sgt. G.T. Smith, the tournament's co-founder.

The event officially kicks off April 17, the first day of practice, followed by another practice day and two days of competition.

Participation is limited to Air Guard members, their dependents, retirees, state and federal employees of the Air National Guard, and active duty personnel assigned to an Air National Guard unit.

Those wishing to compete should call Maj. Ron Deal (DSN: 241-1215 / Com: 478-201-1215) or Tech. Sgt. Chris Carbaja (DSN: 241-3201 / Com. 478-201-3201) or e-mail ron.deal@garobi.ang.af.mil for more information.

The total tournament fee for two anglers is \$135 dollars, which includes the big fish pot, or \$115 for those teams that do not wish to participate for big fish.

Arkansas Soldier tackles pro bass fishing

By Tech. Sgt. Gary Hicks
National Guard Bureau

COLUMBIA, S.C. — It's a little before 5 in the morning when Sgt. Melinda Mize heads out the door. Standing 5-feet, 4-inches tall and weighing just a bit more than 100 pounds, the Arkansas National Guard Soldier is suited up and ready to do battle.

The 23-year old flight operations specialist isn't fighting the Global War on Terrorism this February morning, but she will be in a few short months when her unit deploys to Kuwait and possibly Iraq.

Right now, she's battling against 199 anglers competing in the FLW Outdoors Chevy Open on Lake Murray. It is this year's second event on bass fishing's toughest professional tour. It is dominated by men who have spent more time on the water than Mize has been alive. But the Ben Lomond, Ark., native has the tools to get the job done.

"I think that you don't have any limits, and that's what the National Guard really taught me," Mize said. "Before going through basic training I thought I had limits, but coming out of basic I knew I could do anything if I put my mind to it and really believed in myself."

Mize draws many comparisons between the Guard and professional bass fishing. Such as the last four cold and rainy days she's spent pre-fishing before the 1.25 million dollar tournament.

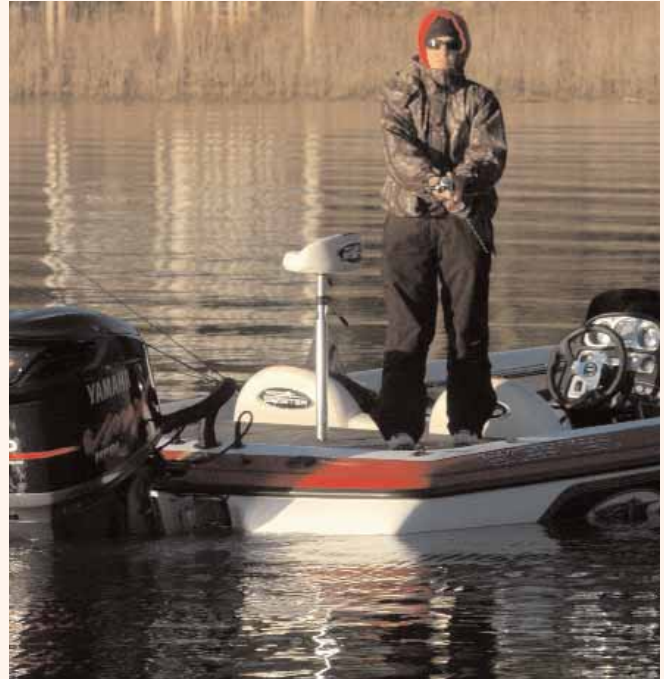
"It's brutal because you are getting up early, just like you do in the military, and going to bed late" she said. "Attention to detail is everything in fishing just like it is in the military. Since joining the National Guard, I pay a lot more attention to everything and everything has to be just right. The mental aspect that military training gives you really helps you step up your game."

Mize has been around fishing all her life. Both her father and mother, Jimmy and Lucy Mize, are professional bass anglers,



Photos by Tech. Sgt. Gary Hicks

Professional bass angler, Sgt. Melinda Mize, a 23-year-old flight operations specialist with the Arkansas National Guard, talks to a vendor during registration for the Lake Murray, S.C. FLW Chevy Open.



Sgt. Melinda Mize throws a lipless-crankbait on day one of the Lake Murray Chevy Open. She finished in 14th place with six fish weighing more than 18 pounds.

competing at the sport's highest level. But having professional anglers as parents is not an automatic entry into world-class events.

She has paid her dues by competing in lower level events as a boater and as a co-angler, or amateur, on professional tours. Her performance earned her the right to compete as a professional on the FLW tour for the 2006 season, a feat not easily accomplished. There are approximately 28.4 million fresh water anglers in the United States. More than 300,000 of those fish bass tournaments. Only 300 or so make it to the sport's highest level.

Making it to the professional level is an accomplishment in itself. Making it at the age of 23 is rare. Being a 23-year-old female and qualifying is unheard of. But making the tour this year has been bitter-sweet for Mize. Shortly after qualifying and picking up a national sponsor, she found out that her unit would be deploying to Kuwait and she would not be able to fish the entire season.

"When I enlisted I knew there was a chance I could deploy," Mize said. "If I wanted to stay and fish the tour, I probably could. But I signed up to serve my country and that's exactly what I'm going to do."

Mize's sponsor is the Army National Guard which has signed a multiyear plat-

inum sponsorship agreement this year that will ensure visibility on all 10 of the FLW Outdoors tournament.

"It's also important to recognize Army National Guard Sgt. Melinda Mize who was selected to be a part of the National Guard team but is being deployed to Kuwait," said Col. Richard Guzzetta, chief of the Army Guard's Strength Maintenance Division in Arlington, Va. "We look forward to her safe return and resuming her place on the National Guard team. Melinda and the other four anglers represent the Army National Guard's 350,000 members who are serving their communities and their country every day."

Mize joined the National Guard for those very reasons - to serve her community and country whether it's here or abroad.

"We had just had a major ice storm in our area, and the National Guard came out to help a lot of families, and that impressed me," she said. "I figured I could still serve my country and also be there for my town or for other parts of this country whenever they need me. I joined a month later."

Mize's professional bass fishing career will be put on hold following the tournament in South Carolina. She will join her unit, Arkansas's 77th Aviation Brigade in Camp Shelby, Miss. to train for the deployment.

National Guard prepared to respond to flu pandemic

ARLINGTON, Va. – The National Guard is prepared to support federal, state and local authorities with, among other things, transportation and distribution of medical supplies should an influenza pandemic occur in the United States.

National Guard leaders are learning as much as possible about the avian flu and the ramifications of a pandemic in order to effectively marshal their forces to help the American people.

LTG H Steven Blum, chief of the National Guard Bureau, and the adjutants general in the 54 states and territories are focusing on the possibility that the H5N1 avian influenza, the "bird flu" in Asia, might change form so that it becomes contagious among humans and preys on people in this country.

Medical officials have cautioned that there is no vaccine for this influenza.

Guard leaders have been reminded that pandemic influenza has occurred three times in the last century, most recently in 1967, and that one-third of the people in the United States got sick during the worst one, the 1918 pandemic that killed tens of millions of people worldwide.

"The National Guard is aware of the significant impact a pandemic outbreak would have on the nation, and the Guard as a whole, and is working through several scenarios that would allow us to support the war effort overseas and at the same time support our communities at home," LTG Blum has stated.

"The National Guard will be fully involved at the local, state and federal level in the planning and execution of the nation's response to a potential pandemic outbreak," the National Guard Bureau chief added.

More than 350,000 National Guard mem-

"The National Guard is uniquely well suited for a relevant role since we work and live in every community across the nation and have a proven track record for success in providing military support to civilian authorities in support of homeland security."

– LTG H Steven Blum

bers are available to the state governors to support any crisis, even as approximately 70,000 Guard members remain deployed overseas, officials stated.

They have the full support of their families and civilian authorities to respond to such a crisis, as they had last year when 58,000 National Guard Soldiers and Airmen from across the country responded to the crisis in the southeastern United States created by Hurricane Katrina and other major storms.

"Your response to the hurricanes was magnificent," LTG Blum recently told adjutants general during a meeting in Arlington, Va. "No one in this room balked. Not a single governor said 'no.' It was the National Guard's finest hour."

"The National Guard is uniquely well suited for a relevant role since we work and live in every community across the nation and have a proven track record for success in providing military support to civilian authorities in support of homeland security," LTG Blum said.

Force protection: Do the things your mother taught you to do

ARLINGTON, Va. – Cough into your sleeve or a handkerchief or tissue paper. Avoid physical contact as much as possible. Wash your hands. Wash Your Hands. WASH YOUR HANDS!

These are among the force protection measures that leaders are emphasizing for members of the National Guard and their families should an influenza pandemic afflict the United States.

Bunkers, barriers and body armor are standard elements of force protection for National Guard Soldiers and Airmen and other military people who find themselves in combat or in other hazardous situations, including the ongoing Global War on Terrorism.

But force protection during a medical crisis would involve more basic public health precautions for Citizen-Soldiers and Airmen who could be called to active duty to help sustain this country's infrastructure and to maintain the integrity of the force.

There is no human vaccine for the form of avian influenza, the "bird flu," that health officials and medical experts claim could result in a pandemic if the H5N1 strain mutates from birds to people.

"Force protection would require you to do all of the things that your mom taught

you," said Lt. Col. Daniel Bochicchio, M.D., vice chief surgeon of the National Guard Bureau. "Those are the things that everyone can do to slow the spread of disease."

"The National Guard has to be a part of the solution. It can't be part of the problem," Bochicchio said.

It is entirely possible, officials claim, that National Guard members would be needed if a significant part of this country's workforce were unavailable for weeks or even months.

Transporting food and medical supplies, operating power plants and sanitation facilities, providing security for medical installations, airports and train terminals, and dealing with social unrest are some of the ways that National Guard troops could be asked to support local, state and federal authorities if so ordered by the governors.

"Soldiers, Airmen and their families are our most precious asset," said Col. David Baldwin, director of operations for the California National Guard. "Practicing good hygiene, maintaining solid rest schedules and taking care of themselves and their families at the first hint of symptoms can make all the difference in the world."

FROM PAGE 1

Bush



Photo by Jim Greenhill

"America's National Guardsmen and women saw the future terrorists intend for us and responded, 'not on my watch,'" President George W. Bush said during remarks at the National Guard Memorial Building in Washington on Feb. 9.

already been implemented or that are coming soon: A better call-up process. More certainty about the lengths of mobilizations. Minimized extensions and minimized repeat mobilizations. Expanded healthcare and education benefits. Tripled re-enlistment bonuses.

"Our Guardsmen ... are standing up for America," Bush said. "You need to know that this administration supports you."

The president said his 2007 budget includes money for the Army National Guard's 330,000 Soldiers. "As the Guard recruits above that level, we'll make certain that there is funding in place for every citizen who steps forward to wear the uniform," he said.

The budget more than doubles the National Guard's money for equipment and modernization over the next five years, he said, touching on some of the topics in the Quadrennial Defense Review released by the Pentagon in early February.

"Any time we've got folks in harm's way, they deserve the best," the commander in chief said. "The best pay possible, the best training possible and the best equipment possible."

The president outlined the National Guard's role in the Global War on Terrorism.

"We're winning," he said. "Yet victory will require more courage and sacrifice. In this war, we have said farewell to some very good men and women - including more than 360 heroes of the National Guard."

More than 260,000 members of the National Guard have been mobilized since the attacks of Sept. 11, 2001, Bush said.

"At this moment, Guardsmen and women are training the Afghan National Army, standing watch over the world's most dangerous terrorists in Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, and taking the fight to the enemy in Iraq," he added.

Families and employers make that service possible, he said. "The families of the Guard serve our country as well," Bush said. "Businesses that are putting patriotism ahead of profit deserve the gratitude of all Americans."

The president called the National Guard's response to Hurricane Katrina "The largest stateside deployment in National Guard history," and reminded the audience that Minutemen from every state conducted search and rescue operations, handed out food and water, provided emergency medical care, enforced the law, repaired homes and restored power.

"Together, they saved lives and helped evacuate over 175,000 people," the president said.

Bush drew a laugh when he shared this anecdote: Pennsylvania National Guard members repaired a Louisiana woman's roof. "That's a long way to come to help us," the woman told the Soldiers. "We're really grateful, and you boys are going to heaven, I tell you."

The bust of the president was sculpted by Charles Parks of Wilmington, Del., from money raised by the National Guard Association of Texas Educational Foundation.

The 45,000 members of NGAUS are mostly current or former Army and Air National Guard officers. "For 128 years, the National Guard Association has been fighting for the Citizen-Soldiers who fight for America," the president said.

The president addressed an audience that included Brig. Gen. Robert Taylor, NGAUS chairman and Michigan's assistant adjutant general. Others included Lt. Gen. Daniel James III, director of the Air National Guard; Maj. Gen. Roger Lempe, president of the Adjutant General Association; and Brig. Gen. Steve Koper, retired NGAUS president.

FROM PAGE 1

Football

game," he said. "If you get caught up in all of the other stuff, then you miss out on the opportunities that are ahead of you."

Since being sworn in last November, he is also Capt. Bryce Fisher, a Washington Air National Guard public affairs officer. Being a military man helped him get to the Super Bowl.

"The Air Force gave me my opportunity to succeed and play football in college, and if it hadn't been for the things I learned - the discipline, the teamwork - I don't think I ever would have got to be a part of a thing like this," he said.

Fisher and the Seahawks say his roles as a Guardsman and pro football player work two ways. He brings the discipline of the military to the team. As a Seahawk, he highlights the role of the National Guard to the nation.

"It puts my name out there," Fisher said. "And it gives me a chance to shed some light about the fact that there are a lot of people who are Soldiers in a lot of different environments - doctors, lawyers - and they're doing their one weekend a month and two weeks a year, doing great things. We're professional [Guard members], but we're people."

Tim Ruskell, the Seahawks' president of football operations, said the qualities that the defensive end honed in the Guard are an asset to the team.

"We're just so proud of what he's accomplished," Ruskell said. "Not his numbers - I mean, the sacks are great and everything - but the character that he brings to our locker room, the discipline and the preparation and the work ethic. And that permeates throughout the locker room - certainly along the defensive line - and it adds to what this team has done."

Head Coach Mike Holmgren echoed that



Fisher talks with defensive line coach Dwaine Board before the Seahawks' defeated the Carolina Panthers 34-14 for the National Football Conference championship, in Seattle on Jan. 22.

observation the day after the Seahawks defeated the Carolina Panthers to clinch the NFC title. "First of all, Bryce has had a great season," Holmgren said. "He brings a very disciplined attitude, a very try-hard attitude and an attitude that he goes 150 miles per hour all the time - a kind of never-quit kind of attitude. And I'm sure there's a lot of carry over from his military background."

Holmgren was looking for exactly that kind of discipline and Minuteman teamwork when he brought Fisher to Seattle to help turn the Seahawks from also-rans into Super Bowl contenders.

"He brought the type of character that we're looking for," Holmgren said, "and the type of never quit, high effort, 'go until I can't go anymore' attitude."

Fisher was quick to talk up the Seahawks' offense. But it is said the best offense is a good defense, and Fisher has had the best season of his five-year NFL career.

He made 34 solo tackles, assisted on 13 others and sacked quarterbacks a team-high nine times during the Seahawks' 13-3 regular season. He recorded five tackles and four assists and one sack during Seattle's playoff victories over Washington and Carolina. He had no tackles or sacks in the Super Bowl.

"We lost. We didn't play our best football," he said. "We didn't take advantage of our opportunities. We outplayed them in the first half. In the second half, they took advantage of some mistakes we made."

When Fisher came to the Seahawks from St. Louis for this season, he came home. He was born in Renton, Wash. That made winning the NFC title especially sweet. It was the Seattle franchise's first championship in its 30-year history.

Fisher graduated from U.S. Air Force Academy in 1999.

"I wasn't focused on the NFL at the Academy," he said. "I was focused on graduating and learning to be a good officer. Then the opportunity presented itself to convert my commitment to reserve time, and I took that."

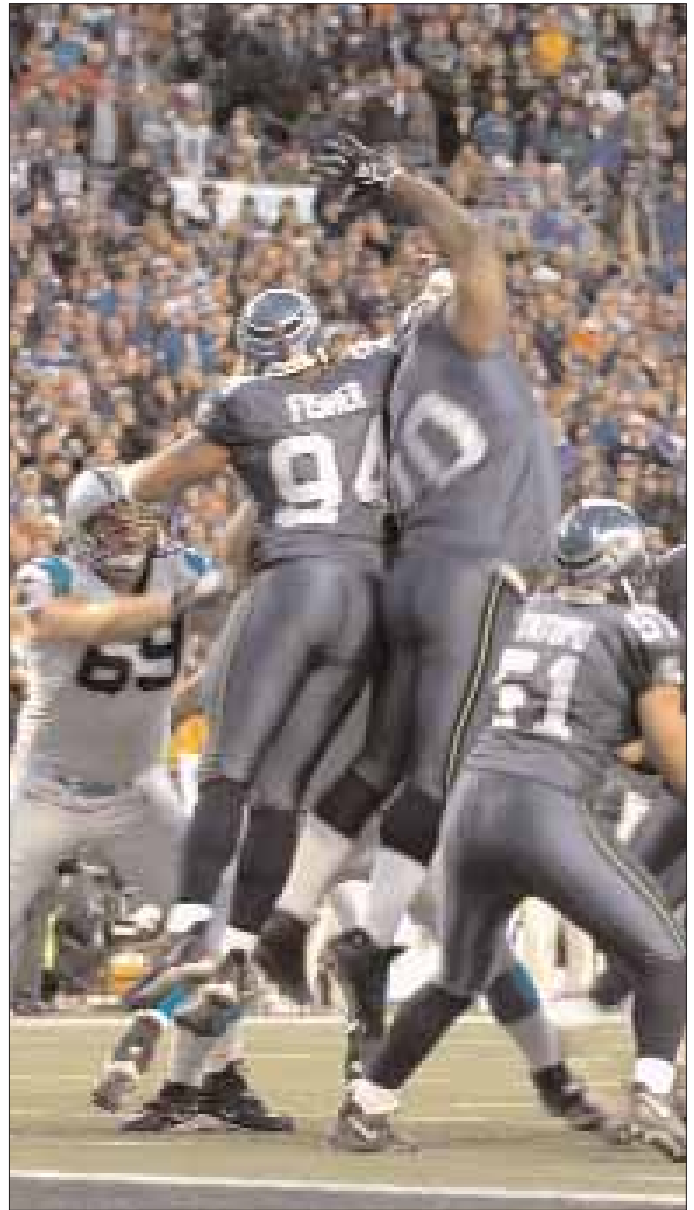
He spent two years on active duty before negotiating to serve nine years of reserve time to complete his military commitment. He picked the National Guard. His father, Richard, served in the Army Reserve.

He's a family man. A good place for his wife Bobbi and their two children to live figured into his decision to play for Seattle. So did being close to his parents. "This is where I grew up. I'm on the middle to back half of my career. This is the kind of place that I wanted to be [with] my wife and kids. This is the kind of city and kind of organization that I wanted to be a part of."

"What's crazy is that no other team was really looking to sign me as a starter. That was tops on my list getting a chance to come home. We wanted to be close to one of our families, either mine or hers."

If Fisher's Super Bowl appearance is followed by orders deploying him for duty with the National Guard, he'll still have his game face on.

"If they say it's time for me to go, it's time for me to go," he said. "When I signed on to be in the military, I knew what I was signing on for. It's part of my commitment. I've been



Photos by Sgt. Jim Greenhill

Defensive end (94) Bryce Fisher, a captain in the Washington Air National Guard, goes airborne to block a Carolina Panthers' extra-point kick during the Seattle Seahawks' 34-14 National Football Conference championship game.

blessed to have some great commanders who have put me in great positions.

"If the president says, 'Look, we want the public affairs officer of the Washington National Guard,' then it's time for me to go do that."

Fisher says the National Guard can offer young adults a great start in life.

"I really believe that young men and women can benefit from serving and learning to be in a team environment," he said. "Learning that it's not all about me; it's about the organization; it's about doing something higher.

"As a member of the Guard now instead of active duty, I get to still be a part of that, and I'm thankful."

After the Super Bowl, Fisher said he would volunteer to work with Boys and Girls Clubs and continue his six-day-a-week workout schedule. "There are hundreds of guys who want to come in and compete for my job," he said. "Even more guys who want to take the NFC title back from us."

Besides, he said, he needs to stay in shape to pass his Air Guard physical fitness tests - as if that's going to be a problem.

Contacting a Family Program Coordinator near you

The National Guard Family Program office in each state joint force headquarters (JFHQ) is designed to assist family members of all service members, regardless of the military organization or status, with information and/or referrals. Following is a list of Family Program offices in the 54 states and territories followed by Wing Family Program Coordinators.

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See LIST on Page 13

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'Lone Star' Division takes the reigns in Kosovo

By **Sgt. Matthew Chlosta**

Army News Service

CAMP BONDSTEEL, Kosovo – Inside a giant “clam shell” bubble dome, Soldiers from the 36th Infantry Division, Texas National Guard, took command of Kosovo Force Multi-National Brigade (East) Jan. 18 in a transfer of authority ceremony – their division’s first deployment to Europe since World War II.

The outgoing commander, Brig. Gen. John Harrel, 40th Infantry Division, California National Guard, handed authority to Brig. Gen. Darren Owens of Task Force Falcon, 36th Infantry Division.

“You were active in promoting my policy of support to UNMIK and the provisional institutions of self-government, thus contributing to back up my action aimed to show that, here in Kosovo, ‘together we can’ make the difference,” said Lt. Gen. Giuseppe Valotto, commander, KFOR, Italian Army. “Now it is

up to General Owens to take over the command and to lead the brigade in its mission, to maintain a safe and secure environment for all the people of Kosovo.”

Harrel talked about missions and goals his unit accomplished, and he advised the Kosovars to keep looking forward to their future status talks, scheduled to begin this year.

“Today marks the official end of this historic mission for the ‘Peacemakers of the 40th Infantry Division,’” Harrel said. “During our time here we have witnessed amazing progress. The Kosovo Police Service has assumed responsibility for routine police functions throughout the Gijlan and Ferizaj regions. Economic expansion and new business opportunities are evident throughout our area of responsibility. But most important for the people of Kosovo, progress is being made on the political front.

“Following a comprehensive review of

standards, Mr. Kai Eide recommended to the U.N. Security Council that status talks begin ... and as we stand here today, final preparations are being made for that process to get underway. Leaders at every level must do their part to guide the process and to resist participation in unhelpful activities.”

Troops from the “Lone Star” Division watched as Owens and Command Sgt. Major Kenneth Boyer, 36th Infantry Division, uncased the division colors on European soil for the first time since the “Fight’n 36th” took part in the invasion of Italy during World War II in 1943.

“As Texans, you will see that we are a friendly people,” Owens said. “But behind that friendly smile you will find that Texans are a tough people. The good folks here will find that we are good neighbors. The bad folks will find that we will be hard and relentless in the pursuit of peace, justice and the rule of law. We are here on a noble mis-

sion: to help make Kosovo a peaceful and safe place.

“In our ranks stand fellow National Guardsmen, Reservists, and Regular Army Soldiers from 29 states and territories. We have the same brigade-sized force as the 40th Division. Our Soldiers patrol on foot, to get to know the local folks. We will continue working with the KPS and the civil authorities in Kosovo.

“I promise you this: We will not take sides. We will support the political process to determine the future status of Kosovo. We will do our part, working hand in hand with the police, and civil authorities to make this a place where decent folks can live without fear. So now is the time and now is the hour for all of us to re-dedicate ourselves to the hard work of peace, and let no one stand in the way.”

(Editor’s note: Sgt. Matthew Chlosta serves with the 4th Public Affairs Detachment.)

Texas Air National Guard changes commanders

By **Tech. Sgt. Gregory Rippes**

Texas National Guard Public Affairs

AUSTIN, Texas – The Texas Air National Guard changed commanders in a ceremony Feb. 5, with Maj. Gen. Charles G. Rodriguez, adjutant general of Texas, presiding over the transfer of authority from Maj. Gen. Jerry Ragsdale to Maj. Gen. Allen Dehnert.

The commander of the Texas Air National Guard is the senior Air Guard officer within Texas state headquarters and acts on behalf of the adjutant general of Texas, commanding, controlling and supervising all Air Guard units within the state. The Texas Air National Guard numbers approximately 3,000 Airmen.

The Texas Air National Guard includes the 136th Airlift Wing (Fort Worth), 147th Fighter Wing (Houston), 149th Fighter Wing (San Antonio), 204th Security Forces Squadron (El Paso), 209th Weather Flight (Austin), 265th Combat Communications Group (Garland), 272nd Engineering Installation Squadron (La Porte) and 273rd Information Operations Squadron (San Antonio).

Ragsdale retired from the traditional position with more than 30 years of service to the Texas Air Guard. Addressing ceremony participants, Rodriguez described him as “a dedicated patriot” and “a consummate team builder.”

“His leadership has born tremendous fruits,” Rodriguez said of Ragsdale, explaining that the members of his team had excelled in safety, readiness and operations. The adjutant general listed the activities and accomplishments of the Texas Guard under Ragsdale’s watch, and pointed out the Texas Air Guard’s role in the response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita – without prior planning.

“All this time General Ragsdale was involved,” Rodriguez concluded. “His leadership translated to the calm presence the Air Guard exhibits.”

Following his comments, Rodriguez presented Ragsdale with the Legion of Merit (first oak leaf cluster). The accompanying citation noted the establishment of a pioneer information operations squadron on Lackland Air Force Base, the groundwork for a Predator unmanned aerial vehicle squadron at Ellington Field and the initiation of a junior officer mentoring program under Ragsdale’s leadership.

“Our focus will be mission readiness, taking care of our people, and modernization,” Ragsdale said.

Body armor reimbursement approved

By **Maj. Paul Cucuzzella**

U.S. Army Claims Service

WASHINGTON – Soldiers who bought body armor and certain other protective, health and safety equipment for use in operations Noble Eagle, Enduring Freedom or Iraqi Freedom can get reimbursed, according to final instructions issued by the Secretary of the Army.

Soldiers can also be paid for these items if they were bought by someone else, such as family members. The secretary’s instructions were issued Nov. 21.

Soldiers on active duty – including those in the Army National Guard – former Soldiers and survivors of dead Soldiers can file claims and be reimbursed for privately-purchased protective equipment if the Soldier was not issued equivalent equipment by the Army prior to deployment.

The Army will reimburse Soldiers for protective body armor, combat helmets, ballistic eye protection, hydration systems, summer weight gloves and knee and elbow pads.

As for body armor, a Soldier may be reimbursed for the purchase of a complete outer tactical vest (OTV) or for the separately-purchased components of an OTV, to include Small Arms Protective Insert (SAPI) plates.

The equipment must have been purchased after Sept. 10, 2001, and before Aug. 1, 2004, and all equipment for which reimbursement is sought must be turned into the Army when a reimbursement claim is filed.

Claimants who no longer have the equipment must explain in writing why they cannot turn the items in.

If there is a good reason, they may still be paid.

The amount of reimbursement depends upon whether the claimant produces proof of the actual purchase price. A claimant who provides proof of purchase will be reimbursed the full purchase price plus shipping costs – up to \$1,100 for any single item.

If no proof of purchase is provided, the claimant will be reimbursed at a rate pre-established by the Department of the Army for each item of equipment. For example, the Army will pay \$551.60 for a complete OTV if no purchase receipt is submitted with the claim.

Current active duty or active reserve component Soldiers who seek reimbursement should complete and file a DD Form 2902 with the first field grade

commander in the Soldier’s current chain of command.

With the completed DD Form 2902, the Soldier must provide a copy of proof of deployment (such as deployment orders or a DD Form 214 noting deployment) and copies of all receipts or other proof of purchase.

The Soldier must also turn in all reimbursable items to his or her unit at the time the claim is filed. If a Soldier is not in possession of some or all of the items, the Soldier should submit a written statement explaining why.

Former Soldiers and survivors of dead Soldiers should complete a DD Form 2902 claim form and mail it directly to the U.S. Army Claims Service (USARCS) at the address provided in block 12 of the DD Form 2902.

Claims forms mailed to USARCS must be accompanied by copies of proof of deployment and proof of purchase – and the items for which reimbursement is sought.

Shipping costs for delivering items to USARCS are compensable and can be noted on the DD Form 2902. Again, if the items are not available for turn in, a written explanation is sufficient.

Once a claim is filed, it will be processed through USARCS for payment by the Defense Finance and Accounting Service. Either USARCS or the claimant’s chain of command will inform the claimant of any deficiencies and will provide ample opportunity to correct any such deficiency.

Although the claims process has been designed to ensure rapid settlement and payment, potential claimants should not wait too long to file claims, as all claims must be filed by Oct 3, 2006.

More information on the body armor and protective equipment reimbursement program, including a list of reimbursable items and the pre-established compensation rates, can be found by accessing www.jagcnet.army.mil and selecting the U.S. Army Claims Service link under the “Client Services and Links” section.

This link can be accessed by the public. Potential claimants can also obtain a printable DD Form 2902 through this link. Claimants or commanders can also contact Maj. Paul Cucuzzella, Project Officer, USARCS at paul.cucuzzella@emh1.ftmeade.army.mil or at (301) 677-7009, Ext. 431 with any questions.

Guarding America

What's going on in the National Guard? A brief look across the United States:

ALASKA: Gov. Frank H. Murkowski put forward legislation to honor members of the Alaska National Guard returning from overseas combat by presenting them with complimentary fish and game licenses. House Bill 451 and Senate Bill 286 authorize the governor to direct the commissioner of the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to provide complimentary fishing and hunting licenses to those members of the Alaska National Guard who have been deployed for 30 or more consecutive days for the purpose of fighting in, or providing direct support for, operations outside the United States.

ARKANSAS: The 39th Brigade Combat Team awarded its second Silver Star on Feb. 4 for actions during its recent deployment in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom II. 1st Lt. Michael McCarty of Bald Knob, Ark., earned the honor during an ambush on Nov. 20, 2004, when he jumped from a moving Humvee and charged a three-man machine-gun crew and single handedly took it out. The 39th presented its first Silver Star in April 2004, posthumously, to Sgt. Russell Collier, a medic from Harrison, Ark., who gave his life on Oct. 3, 2004. Collier laid his weapon down and ran forward into an ambush under heavy gunfire to try to save the life of a fallen Soldier.

MAINE: A new army aviation support facility in Bangor was opened during a mid-February ceremony. The state-of-the-art facility will be the home to the 112th Medical Company (Air Ambulance); Operational Support Airlift Command; 1st Battalion, 224th Aviation; and the 3rd Battalion, 142nd Aviation.

MARYLAND: The Maryland Army National Guard conducted Freedom Salute ceremonies for the Soldiers of the 629th Military Intelligence Battalion's Tactual Unmanned Aerial Vehicle Platoon and the 1297th Corps Support Battalion. Both units served in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom for more than one year. In a joint effort the Maryland National Guard and the U.S. Navy

completed construction on the new Patuxent River Readiness Center. Congressmen Steny Hoyer and Lt. Governor Michael Steele attend the ribbon cutting ceremony in February.

MISSISSIPPI: Maj. Gen. Harold Cross, the adjutant general, awarded the Silver Star to the family of Sgt. Robert Shane Pugh, a combat medic for the 1st Battalion, 155th Infantry, 155th Brigade Combat Team. Pugh died in Iraq on March 2, 2005, from injuries he received when an improvised explosive device detonated near his vehicle. Following the incident and without regard for his own injuries, Pugh instructed others how to treat the injuries of a fellow Soldier who survived because of the treatment. Pugh is the only soldier in the 155th Brigade Combat Team to receive the Silver Star.

MISSOURI: The Missouri National Guard in early February welcomed home the main body of the 1035th Maintenance Company from its year-long mobilization for the Global War on Terrorism. The unit spent time in Iraq and Kuwait. A 30-member platoon from the company is still in Iraq, assigned to the 115th Maintenance Company of the Utah National Guard.

MONTANA: The Montana National Guard's Youth ChalleNGe program has started its 14th class, sending nearly 90 cadets to live on the campus of the University of Montana in Dillon for five months of military-style training and education. Youth ChalleNGe is a National Guard program geared for teens from 16-18 years old who have not performed well in a traditional classroom setting. The Montana program has graduated over 1,000 students who have received their GEDs. Many of the graduates join the service and many attend college.

NEW HAMPSHIRE: Pfc. Frank Crabtree of the 2nd Battalion, 197th Field Artillery in Berlin became the first New Hampshire Guard member to profit from G-RAP, the new Recruiting Assistant Program. It offers an incentive of up to \$2,000 to traditional Guard members for referring a new recruit. Crabtree was recognized for the enlistment of Raymond Eames, a 20-year-old Berlin

resident. It was the seventh successful referral for Crabtree, who is an 18-year-old senior at Berlin High School. He has been in the New Hampshire Army Guard for just over a year. He brought the six other Soldiers into the Guard before the G-RAP program had started. However, Crabtree was rewarded for his extraordinary efforts by earning a slot at Airborne School after he completes Advanced Individual Training.

OREGON: Fifteen members of the Army National Guard's 1249th Engineer Battalion will spend their two weeks of annual training rebuilding Fort Clatsop, which burned down last November, just before a major event in the bicentennial celebration of the Lewis and Clark Expedition. The Corps of Discovery stayed at the original Fort Clatsop during the winter of 1805-06 after reaching the Pacific Coast. One group of engineers was slated to begin rebuilding quarters for enlisted men on Feb. 22. A second group is expected to begin reconstructing the officers' quarters on March 9. Banners on the trucks hauling the logs proclaim: "As Soldiers built Fort Clatsop 200 years ago, Soldiers are rebuilding it now."

PENNSYLVANIA: The Pennsylvania Army Guard began receiving the first of its rolling Stryker stock in February. They are new Humvees outfitted with the FBCB2 communications suite. Pennsylvania is the only National Guard organization in the nation earmarked to receive the Stryker. The 56th Stryker Brigade is expected to be fully operational in 2008.

RHODE ISLAND: Gov. Donald Carcieri has announced the appointment of Brig. Gen. Robert Thomas Bray as adjutant general. Bray currently serves as the deputy commanding general for the Army National Guard at the U.S. Army Field Artillery in Fort Sill, Oklahoma. Bray retired from the Sioux Falls Rescue Department in South Dakota after 27 years of service. He most recently served as fire division chief in charge of special operations.

TEXAS: Members of the 149th Fighter Wing are learning how to make free-fall bombs into "smart" bombs. The ammo and loading sections of the wing's maintenance squadron are training to use the Joint Direct Attack Munition (JDAM), which is a guidance tail kit that converts unguided 2,000-pound bombs into highly accurate ones. They will put their new training to use during

Exercise Coronet Cactus in Arizona in April. The wing's F-16s will be expected to drop 20 JDAMs.

UTAH: Army Guard Sgt. Scott Campbell, 640th Regional Training Institute, provided medical assistance to an elderly man and his 51-year-old daughter after their sport utility vehicle overturned about 120 miles east of Reno in late January. Campbell determined that the man, the driver, was in the early stages of shock and helped wrap him in a blanket and get him into the warmth of another vehicle. He also crawled into the SUV to assess the condition of the daughter who was trapped inside. Her arm had gone through the window and was pinned under the vehicle

which lay on its roof. He helped stop the bleeding and held the woman steady as emergency medical technicians used the Jaws of Life to extract the woman. "Two years ago the 640th taught the medical [common task training] to deploying units every weekend for two to three months," Campbell said. "That training and experience allowed me to know exactly what to do."

VIRGINIA: Gov. Tim Kaine has come on strong for the Virginia National Guard early in his new administration. He has backed a budget amendment that would allow the commonwealth to provide a \$2,000 re-enlistment bonus for Virginia Guard Soldiers and Airmen who reenlist for at least two years. This bonus is in addition to federal bonus entitlements.

WISCONSIN: Gov. Jim Doyle traveled with three other governors – Mike Huckabee from Arkansas, Rick Perry from Texas and Dave Freudenthal from Wyoming – to Kuwait, Iraq, Pakistan and Afghanistan Jan. 24-31 at the invitation of the Defense and State departments. Doyle met and dined with Wisconsin National Guard troops from Headquarters, 32nd Infantry Brigade; 1st Battalion, 120th Field Artillery; 2nd Battalion, 127th Infantry; and 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry. He praised Wisconsin troops for their "high morale, a very clear sense of mission and a very clear belief that it can be accomplished" in a teleconference from the region.

Items for each state should be no longer than three sentences. Deadline is the 10th of each month. Submit to Robert.Haskell@ngb.af.mil and Editor.OnGuard@ngb.af.mil.



U.S. Army Photo

Wisconsin Gov. Jim Doyle talks with Lt. Col. G. Michael Rand, commander of 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry, at Camp Beuhring, Kuwait, where the governor visited Wisconsin National Guard Soldiers.

Bahamas joins Rhode Island in the State Partnership

By Lt. Col. Michael McNamara
and Capt. Michael Manning

Rhode Island National Guard

In March 1776 an American expeditionary force arrived off the island of New Providence in the Bahamas.

The mission – ordered by Gen. George Washington and the Continental Congress – was to secure the capital of Nassau and capture much-needed military supplies, especially gunpowder.

Most of the vessels in the Continental Task Force were from the Colony of Rhode Island. Thus, Rhode Islanders were an integral part of the first, successful, American amphibious invasion of a hostile shore.

Rhode Island military personnel returned to the Bahamas 230 years later in an official capacity. But this time they entered the capital of Nassau equipped for peace, under the banner of the State Partnership Program (SPP).

The SPP evolved from the Joint Contact Team Program in 1993. The intent was to help developing democracies balance civil and military activities under elected national leadership. Today – under the control of the National Guard – the SPP brings American states and territories together with participating partner nations through a wide range of military and civilian activities designed to develop a mutu-

ally beneficial relationship between the two countries.

Currently, there are 50 partnerships worldwide. The National Guard is ideally suited to overseeing these, bringing a unique Citizen-Soldier character to a dual federal and state mission.

The partnership between Rhode Island and the Bahamas formally began in December 2005, when representatives from the Bahamas traveled to Rhode Island and were received by Brig. Gen. John Enright, adjutant general.

A formal agreement was signed and a five-year plan formulated. The affiliation was further cemented in January, when Enright and a Rhode Island delegation toured Bahamian ministries and defense installations.

Representatives from the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency, State Police, Fire Chiefs' Association and National Guard met with their Bahamian counterparts. Exchanges are scheduled to begin in March, when the Rhode Island Emergency Management Agency will travel to the Bahamas and instruct Bahamian emergency managers in the incident command system as well as hurricane preparedness and mitigation planning.

Two additional interactions are scheduled for 2006. These events will continue to facilitate and encourage a positive



Submitted photos

Brig. Gen. John Enright and members of the Rhode Island delegation brief the Honorable Cynthia Pratt, deputy prime minister of the Bahamas, on the SPP in January 2006.

exchange of tactics, techniques and procedures between Rhode Island and the Bahamas.

In 1776, Rhode Islanders were determined to dictate to the Bahamas. Today, under the auspicious of the SPP, Rhode

Islanders and Bahamians can teach each other and interact together for a better future.

(Editor's note: Lt. Col. Michael McNamara is the State Public Affairs officer for the Rhode Island National Guard and Capt. Michael Manning is the Rhode Island SPP coordinator.)

Coalition efforts improve Afghanistan

American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON – Humanitarian efforts continue in Afghanistan as coalition forces removed snow from impassable roads and built hygiene facilities at a small school and international diplomats visited a provincial reconstruction team Jan. 21.

U.S. troops from Task Force Sword stepped in to help clear roads rendered nearly impassable by snow and ice, Combined Forces Command Afghanistan officials said.

"It's a joint effort between the (U.S.) military, Afghan government and contractors hired by the provincial reconstruction teams," said Lt. Col. Jud Cook, Task Force Sword deputy commander.

This joint team cleared roads in Sharona, Orgun-E and various forward operating bases around Afghanistan. Task Force Sword used equipment from its road construction projects to clear the ice and snow. By February, the task force also was scheduled to have 20 sand and salt spreaders attached to five-ton trucks to help clear the roads.

The snow and ice removal helps accomplish the military mission by allowing trucks to travel to remote locations. It also makes these same roads available to civilian and commercial traffic, Cook said.

In Uruzgan province, Afghan construction workers completed hygiene facilities and a fresh water well at a boys school in central Afghanistan. U.S. forces paid for the projects, which cost more than \$30,000 and

employed eight Afghans for two months. The hygiene facilities were built over existing hot springs, allowing residents to get hot water in a building where electric water heaters are not available.

"The construction of these facilities not only provided jobs and much needed currency for the local residents, but they also show the Afghan people that coalition and U.S. forces are here to help," said Lt. Col. Jerry O'Hara, Combined Joint Task Force 76 spokesman.

More than 90 construction and renovation projects are under way in the Uruzgan province, totaling more than \$6 million.

Diplomats from around the world visited the provincial reconstruction team in Panjshir province Jan. 21 to witness reconstruction efforts of Combined Joint Task Force 76 and the newest PRT. Before visiting the Panjshir PRT, CJTF 76 commander Maj. Gen. Jason Kamiya briefed government officials from 13 nations and the European Union about reconstruction projects.

"The day highlighted how coalition military and civilian agencies, whether coalition or not, can and should provide effective mutual support on the security and humanitarian fronts," said Richard Smyth, the task force's political adviser.

The first of its kind, the Panjshir PRT is a joint effort between the members of CJTF 76 and the U.S. Embassy.

Governor welcomed with a bang ...



New Jersey National Guard photo

The newest commander in chief of the New Jersey National Guard, Gov. Jon Corzine, received the traditional 19-gun salute from Battery B, 3rd Battalion, 112th Field Artillery from Lawrenceville during his inauguration at the Trenton War Memorial on Jan. 17. Members of the firing battery were awarded the Meritorious Unit Commendation for their Operation Iraqi Freedom deployment from January to December 2004. The 3rd/112th Soldiers served with distinction as part of the 89th Military Police Brigade.